



May/June 2005



The 'Dean' of Water Management Steps Down After 30 Years of Public Service

Parting words from Henry Dean

Straight talker.
Innovative thinker.
Listener. Facilitator.
Leader.

Those are words that people use to describe Henry Dean, who after 30 years of public service to the state, is retiring June 1 as South Florida Water Management District executive director.

This year, Dean celebrated 21 years of continuous service as an executive director of a Florida water management district (17 years at St. Johns River). No one else can claim this distinction in leadership. Before joining the St. Johns River District in 1984, he served as general counsel for the Florida Department of Natural Resources in Tallahassee from 1979 to 1984. He was an attorney in private practice from 1978 to 1979. In the early-1970s while completing law school at Florida State University, Dean worked as a legislative aide for then Florida Sen. Bob Graham.

When Dean joined the South Florida Water Management District in June 2001, the agency was faced with an historic record drought and tasked with restoring the Everglades – the world's largest environmental restoration public works project. The District needed steady direction and firm leadership

to strengthen public trust and accomplish this monumental mandate. Dean brought focus and energy to the agency through his project-driven, service-centered, no-nonsense leadership. Under his guidance, the District achieved a plethora of water resource accomplishments, all of which speak for themselves.

Now, Henry Dean is doing the talking:

What was your biggest challenge during your tenure at the South Florida Water Management District?

"Finding a way, with help from staff, to accelerate Everglades restoration. The challenge was finding a way to collapse 30 years into five years to get the water right. And, we met with great success with *Acceler8*!"

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In this 1984 photo, Henry Dean (front right) is presented with a resolution by Gov. Bob Graham (center) and the Cabinet of the State of Florida. The resolution recognized Dean's high professional standards in the performance of his duties and thanked him for his service with the Department of Natural Resources. Dean left the department to assume the position of general counsel for the St. Johns River Water Management District and later became the agency's executive director, where he served for 17 years.

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